

From: suestine@juno.com
Sent: Monday, June 12, 2006 5:45 PM
To: NOP Livestock
Subject: ANPR COMMENTS

To: Mark Bradley

From: Mike Stine, StoneBridge Farms, 26668 290th Street, Long Prairie, MN 56347.

Access to Pasture:

Historically all ruminant farm animals were raised and spent their entire lives on pasture. Farmers have departed from this natural situation as a result of the industrialization of agriculture. The correct response is therefor that all of us, farmers, consumers, government officials should support 100% grass-fed ruminant agriculture.

Read any of the literature summarizing the benefits, from authors like Allan Nation, Jim Gerrish, Paul Rosin, Eric Schlosser, Michael Pollan, to name a few, and one sees thoughtfully documented research to support the benefits. It is simply a matter of education and the WEB will eventually provide all of us with this evidence.

Ruminant Animal Nutrition:

Pasture should provide as near as possible to 100% of all nutritional requirements. There is no evidence that specifically defines 30% as a magic number. Mechanical harvesting of grasses and legumes is sometimes necessary due to the environmental factors such as drought, severe winters, and other local effects but it should be thought of as strictly a supplement to grazing.

Any compromise in the above is a violation of the original meaning of the organic livestock management. In general solar energy provides the cheapest source of feed (pasture) and all other sources that depend on fossil fuels and sources will eventually get more expensive.

Minimum Pasture Requirements:

120 days is a beginning but is simply a step or two down the right path. The path I refer to is one where the farmer relearns how to provide nutritional balance through healthy soils and a salad bar of plants which constitute a balance diet. If the diet is available the cow itself will select a balanced diet as long as we provide the appropriate plants.

Measurement, Enforcement, and Compliance:

Ultimately we will have to measure the ratio of Omega 3 Vs Omega 6 fatty acids, the amount of CLA as

well as the current parameters. It should be required for both meat and milk.

Market and Other Impacts:

We are already behind in this area and the boom in the organic market is only the beginning.

Thanks,

Mike Stine